

Report for 2002GU10B: Regional Dissemination of a Locally-developed Integrated Island Ecology & Resource Management Textbook, Website, & Teachers Manual/Activity Guide

- Conference Proceedings:
 - Furey, John F., 2002, Island Ecology & Resource Management: Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands textbook project, in 2002 Pacific Education Conference Proceedings at American Samoa, Pacific Regional Education Laboratory, Honolulu, HI
- Other Publications:
 - Furey, John F. 2003, Website, <http://www.crees.org/ecology/default.htm>, 800p.

Report Follows:

Project Title

Regional Dissemination of a Locally-developed Integrated Island Ecology & Resource Management Textbook, Website, & Teacher's Manual/Activity Guide

Problem and Research Objectives

Throughout the Pacific island region, human populations suffer from the combination of distressed social and financial economies, growing populations, and limited and fragile island resources. A locally-applicable program of integrated environmental education is critical to address these issues and the need has been widely expressed throughout the region in recent years. This project directly addressed this need.

“Experts” in the fields of environmental science and education are often recruited from non-island areas and lack needed foundational information of island ecology and island resource management regimes to adequately address local needs.

Regionally-applied two year professional contract programs--originally meant to automatically lapse and therefore provide professional opportunities to islanders who complete their collegiate studies and professional training--effectively cause an exporting of expertise, leaving little environmental and educational knowledge behind. Oftentimes, any reports that are left behind are written in such scientific “ese” as to be uninterpretable by many local program directors.

The Northern Mariana Islands made a concerted effort to address this problem since 1996 and developed a highly readable, regionally-appropriate, 800 page *Island Ecology & Resource Management: Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands* textbook. The book was designed to be applicable throughout the region and permission to “cut & paste” from it is part of the book’s purposes.

This project sought to, in part, address the above-identified problems through a concerted effort to regionally disseminate this comprehensive island ecology/resource management textbook/curriculum throughout the Western Pacific to encourage fellow island education and resource management entities to model it to address their own needs and to save years of start up and drafting and editing time.

Methodology

1. The Activity Guide/Teachers Manual for the *Island Ecology & Resource Management: Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands* textbook is being revised and printed.
2. A website was established.
3. Travel to several Pacific Islands was undertaken by the PI to share the work and encourage regional adoption, revision, and transformation of the information into language and frameworks applicable to each island’s needs.

Principal Findings and Significance

During the Pacific Education Conference held in 2002 at American Samoa, participants in the presentation made by the PI expressed their enthusiastic acceptance of the textbook CD's and the project in general. This was done in surveys conducted by the Pacific Regional Education Laboratory in Honolulu, HI. Similar positive responses were made following presentations conducted by the PI in Honolulu, HI, at Kosrae Island, at Ponape Island, at Chuuk Island and at Guam. The change of islands from Belau and Yap to instead Oahu and American Samoa was done to facilitate the presentation in American Samoa and take advantage of the opportunity to reach the large group of island education specialists gathered at this important annual conference. Through this conference venue and at the individual island visits, Compact Discs of the ecology textbook project were disseminated throughout the Pacific Region.

Although still in the "Under Construction" stage, the Website component of this project is developing well. A contract has been awarded and draft chapters are currently posted on the College Research Education and Extension Services' website at <http://www.crees.org/ecology/default.htm>. An updated, more complete, and more interactive site is currently being developed by NMC science and NMC Information Services staff and this project's contract firm of InfoSystems of Saipan.

The project procured key equipment, including two ruggedized notebook computers and a high quality multimedia projector, which provided critical assistance to the PI during the island visits and presentations and continue to be employed for college instruction at NMC. The computers are also being used to upgrade and finalize the project's activity guide and are used to "burn" the project's Compact Discs.

The significance of this environmental education regional dissemination project cannot be over-emphasized. Capacity building in both island resource management agencies and island educational departments is the most important task that water and environment institutions can undertake. This project reached audiences of more than 500 gathered education professionals at the 2002 Pacific Education Conference, key resource managers in Honolulu, and over 15 combined resource managers and educators each at meetings conducted on Kosrae, Ponape, and Chuuk. A recent meeting on Guam conducted by the UOG Marine Laboratory as part of the Western Pacific Regional Sea Grant Consortium effort also occurred and provided the opportunity to share the project and CD's with these gathered Marshallese, Ponapean, Belau, American Samoan, and Guam resource managers.